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PREFABRICATION AND NEW BUILDING MATERIALS

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The organization of the production of new building materials and the organization of prefabrication installations was begun as early as the first part of the year.

This task was entrusted to the Prefabrication Division of the State Building Enterprises under the Ministry of Reconstruction, to carry on part of the work of the Central Administration of the Producers of Building Materials, which as early as 1947 had begun work on the construction of new installation.

Taking the unquestionable advantages of prefabrication into consideration, the Ministry of Reconstruction entrusted this task to the Prefabrication Division of the State Building Enterprises, which began the activation of the first series of installations. They will include:

1. Four factories for light concrete, producing wall units and slabs. Wall units replace about 20 units of brick each. The total annual production will replace the production of 500 million bricks.

It should be emphasized here that the cost of producing the material replacing 1,000 units of brick will be about 4,000 to 4,500 zlotys.

A great advantage of this product is its lightness. The weight amounts to barely 0.6 to 0.9 tons per cubic meter. The equivalent in solid brick, that is, 700 units of brick, weighs about 2.5 to 2.6 tons. With the use of this material, therefore, transportation costs and the cost of labor and binding materials are reduced.

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It is planned to locate one factory at each of the following: Warsaw, Slask, and Wybrzeze, and in one of the central woodland areas in a region where the greatest pressure of construction is foreseen, and where the lack of ceramic installations is felt most.

2. Three factories for compressed or wire-reinforced concrete blocks, with a total production of 36,000 cubic meters of concrete building blocks. They will save 45 to 70 percent in the use of steel, cement, and crushed stone.

These plants will produce prefabricated building units such as ceilings, lintels, portable units, etc., as well as poles for power lines and railway sleepers.

3. Four factories for mortar and concrete, with a total annual production of 320,000 cubic meters. By delivering prepared mortar and concrete to the building site, the necessity of constructing warehouses for cement and lime storage, of digging pits for the lime, of slaking the lime by hand, and of mixing mortar are avoided.

4. Two mechanical gravel installations with a total annual production of 200,000 cubic meters of quality gravel (crushed and washed) will be used in the production of compressed concrete and construction concrete. This gravel will make it possible to obtain suitable concrete of guaranteed quality, saving cement at the same time.

5. A lumber combine for the production of such basic items as window and door frames, etc. will be composed of the following:

a. A mechanical carpentry shop with a sawmill for the production of 120,000 to 150,000 square meters of window and door frames, wall cupboards, shelves, etc., annually, on an 8-hour workday basis.

b. A factory for insulation board and pressboard in order to utilize shavings, sawdust, and other wood waste.

c. A factory for prefabricated economy floors, laminated with a hardwood top layer, and a bottom layer, consisting of short boards. A saving in hardwood of up to 80 percent is gained by using these floors.

d. A factory for beams and wooden, glued, and pegged construction frames, using sawmill by-products (short boards) in large quantities.

A lumber combine with this combination of factories permits almost complete utilization of all the lumber, whereas the current utilization of wood for the principal products amounted to 70 percent.

6. Three factories for prefabricated houses, consisting of a framework of wood or reinforced concrete filled in with shaving or reed sheets, will have an annual production capacity of 1,000 units each.

7. Three factories for the construction of reed wallboard for heat insulation of outer walls or for the construction of partition walls will produce about 300,000 square meters each.

The raw material for the production of such wallboard is full-grown reed which grows plentifully in the waters of our lakes, ponds, and rivers, and is at present considered a noxious weed.

The cutting of the reeds will benefit the water and fishing industries, and the villagers and fishermen will find supplementary earnings in harvesting reeds.

8. One factory for "Golveten"-type inlaid flooring with an annual production of 150,000 to 200,000 square meters of inlaid flooring of the linoleum type.

9. A concrete factory in Warsaw for the production of such prefabricated units as: fittings, steps, ceilings, lintels, and other building units, the lack of which will soon be felt.

When these factories are in operation, the production of building materials will amount to 7 or 8 billion zlotys.

Moreover, later on in the Six-Year Plan an increase is foreseen in the number of factories for compressed concrete, factories for concrete and mortar, gravel installations, etc., as well as the building of factories for high-grade gypsum and installations producing prefabricated gypsum units, such as: dry plaster, ceiling units, wall units, etc.

Prefabrication was first begun in Poland in 1948.

For 1949, there is foreseen the beginning of mass production of prefabricated ceilings in the amount of 700,000 square meters, which will comprise 20 to 25 percent of the total amount of ceilings to be made in 1948. Test production of light concrete and wire concrete will be started. Moreover, the production of crushed gravel will provide gravel for domestic concrete factories and construction jobs.

The construction of all the above-stated factories is already under way.

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